

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of videoconferencing comprising the steps of :
providing a videocommunicator having a video signal input port, a video signal encoding circuit and a video signal output port; and
using a digital still camera to generate video input signals to the video input port of the videocommunicator, the video output port of the videocommunicator capable of communicatively coupling to a communications channel for providing videoconferencing.

Sub 2. 2. A method, according to claim 1, further including the step of using the videocommunicator to transmit audio and video signals over the communication channel.

3. A method, according to claim 1, further including using a digital still camera to provide video signals representing a live target area along with a split screen representing a stored stilled image.

4. A method, according to claim 3, further including using another output port of the videocommunicator to provide video images for a display.

5. A method, according to claim 4, further including using the other output port to output video data representing images received from the digital still camera

along with split screen representation of video images received over the communications channel.

6. An arrangement for use in a videoconferencing system, comprising:

means for encoding and decoding video images; and

a digital still camera having an output port providing digital information representing a target area to said encoding and decoding means.

Sub 23

7. An arrangement for use in a videoconferencing system, comprising:

a set-top box having a first video input port and a video output port, and first and second telephone ports, the set-top box configured and arranged to output video signals via the video output port, output local video data signals via the second telephone port, and input remote video data signals via the second telephone port, responsive to control signals at the first telephone port;

a camera coupled to the first video input port, and configured and arranged to output video signals representative of stored images of scenes captured by the camera;

a telephone coupled to the first telephone port and configured and arranged to receive user control inputs and, responsive thereto, provide control signals to the set-top box; and

a monitor coupled to the video output port to receive the video signals and display images represented by the video signals.

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8. The arrangement of claim 7, further comprising:
the set-top box having a second video input port;
a video camera coupled to the second video input port;
the monitor having a screen viewing area and the set-top box being responsive to control signals to split the screen to simultaneously display a stored image and images represented by the local video data signals.
9. The arrangement of claim 7, further comprising:
the set-top box having a second video input port;
a video camera coupled to the second video input port;
the monitor having a screen viewing area and the set-top box being responsive to control signals to split the screen to simultaneously display a stored image and images represented by the remote video data signals.
10. The arrangement of claim 7, further comprising:
the set-top box having a second video input port;
a video camera coupled to the second video input port;
the monitor having a screen viewing area and the set-top box being responsive to control signals to split the screen to simultaneously display a stored image and images represented by the local video data signals and the remote video data signals.
11. The arrangement of claim 7, further comprising:

the set-top box having a second video input port;

a video camera coupled to the second video input port;

the monitor having a screen viewing area and the set-top box being responsive to control signals to split the screen to simultaneously display a plurality of stored images and images represented by the local video data signals and the remote video data signals.

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12. A video image viewing arrangement, comprising:

a set-top box having first and second input ports, an output port, and an internal video camera, the set-top box, configured and arranged to output display signals via the output port responsive to control signals at the second input port;

an external video camera coupled to the first input port of the set-top box, configured and arranged to output video signals;

a control unit coupled to the second input port and configured and arranged to receive user control inputs and, responsive thereto, provide control signals to the set-top box; and

a display coupled to the output port of the set-top box to receive the display signals.

13. A video image viewing arrangement of claim 12, wherein the display has a screen viewing area and the set-top box is responsive to control signals to split the screen to simultaneously display video information from the internal video camera and video information from the external video camera.

08941975-100197

screen to simultaneously display video information from the internal video camera and video information from the external video camera.

14. A method of videoconferencing comprising the steps of :

providing a videocommunicator having a video signal input port, a video signal encoding circuit and a video signal output port;

using a digital still camera to generate video input signals to the video input port of the videocommunicator, the video output port of the videocommunicator capable of communicatively coupling to a communications channel for providing videoconferencing; and

using the videocommunicator for controllably altering a display, including at least one of pan, tilt and zoom functions, of the video input signals without controlling the digital still camera.

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